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LS 151L.01: Introduction to the Humanities

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SYLLABUS

Liberal Studies 151L, Section 1 (Introduction to Humanities) Autumn, 2006

Purpose and description of course: LS 151L is a so-called literature survey course. The student will be introduced to a broad, general overview of the literature of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), the New Testament, some early (post-Biblical) Christian literature; then a sweep of the classics of ancient Greece, starting with Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 700 BC) and next focusing on the Golden Age of Athens (c. 550-350 BC). The general format for this class will be a read/lecture/open-to-discussion method. Typically a survey class has its strengths and weaknesses, its joys and frustrations. We will do our best to cover a large body of some of the world's greatest literature, and certainly literature that has formed the basis for the culture of Western Civilization. But "best" never seems good enough. Students rightly so are often exasperated by only touching down lightly on most of the major genres and works. The complaints typically lament that too little gets treated with sufficient depth due to the speed that needs to be maintained. More positively, a survey course intends to introduce the student to a variety of works and their historical/cultural context that the student may not otherwise encounter in more focused literature classes. It is hoped that the student will find some special interest in this kind of survey and will pursue further interest in it on his/her own or in other courses.

LS 151L is a four-credit course, of which the fourth credit is attending the Thursday morning (11:10, Urey Lecture Hall) *or* Thursday evening (7:10, SS 352) General Lecture. These 50 minute lectures, given by specialists, correspond to the current week's reading. The lecture will be discussed in the following class period and will show up in some fashion on the exams. Attendance is required.

LS 151L is a General Education course. It minimally satisfies Perspective 2, Literary and Artistic Studies (hence, the "L" designation). LS 151L is also a Writing (W) course and also fulfills a General Education requirement. See page 27 in the 2006-2007 *Catalog* for further explanation on these requirements. Detailed explanation and instruction will be given in class for the writing assignments.

A word about the term "humanities," in the sense of a "humanities course." Very generally speaking, humanities courses deal with subject matter and works that differ from the purpose of the social sciences (sociology, economics, etc.) and from mathematics and the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, etc.). Humanities content addresses the question, What does it mean to be human? That is, how do artists of all types (painters, writers, etc.) try to express the wide range of responses that we have in the human experience—our aspirations, fears, faith, dignity, shame, and other emotions of all kinds? This response can be expressed in many kinds of media (such as sorrow in Michelangelo's sculpture *Pieta*'), but in this class literature is the vehicle. And of course

the best literature gives the reader the best representation of aspects of the human experience. For this reason humanities courses are often called “great book” classes.

Course procedures: As mentioned above, we will follow the schedule of readings (at the end of this syllabus) in this syllabus and will have lecture and discussion on the material read as well as on the material of the most recent General Lecture given on Thursdays (see above). The point of repeating this procedure at all is to urge you to keep up with the reading and lectures. Falling behind in the reading and missing the lectures are a sure recipe for failure. On the other hand, maintaining both should make for a smooth, predictable, stress-free, and successful class.

Evaluation (testing):

Part 1. We will have 2 in-class exams: the first immediately after the seventh week (i.e., in the week of Oct 16) and the second will be the final exam at its scheduled time (8:00-10:00 a.m., Tue, Dec 12, LA 338 (our classroom)). Although both exams will concentrate on the previous un-tested material, some of the previous reading and lecture information will be required in the second exam. This will be made clear in class, but this is another incentive to do all the reading and maintain your notes.

Part 2. Since LS 151L is also a W (writing) course, there will be two writing assignments. The first will be due in the fifth week (week of Sept 25) and the second in the twelfth week (week of Nov 13). Detailed instruction will be given in class.

Grading: Each exam and writing assignment will be worth 100 points each. This total of 400 points will be the basis for the common 10% scale for grades. That is, 400-361 total points is in the A range; 360-321 in the B range; 320-281 in the C range; 280-241 in the D range; 240 total points or fewer is an F. For each grade/point division (described above) 10 points from the top of the division will be a plus (+), and 10 points from the bottom of the division will be a minus (-). The 20 points in between will be the “straight” grade. For example, 355 = B+; 343 = B; 327=B-. If you elect to take the course for Credit/No-Credit, Credit is 241 points or higher.

Precise test dates and paper due-dates will be announced about a week in advance. Therefore, I expect you to take the exams and turn in the papers on that date. No make up exams or extended paper-deadlines will be given unless the inability to meet these deadlines is unforeseen, extraordinary, *and* well documented. Please make every effort to take your exams and turn in your papers on time, because, frankly, I imagine that it would be unlikely that I would accept an excuse to take a make up test or receive a late paper.

Texts: Please purchase all the books listed for this class and section in the Bookstore. One exception is that we will NOT be using Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; do not purchase it for my section. For the sake of saving money, you can always take the chance of finding some other *Odyssey* and Bible, but be warned: the verse-numbering, the pagination, and the translation itself, will vary so greatly that it will cause you endless confusion in

finding where we are in class discussion, not to mention the introductory material and helpful notes that will be part of the testing and writing assignments.

Assessment: The concept of assessment, made popular in the last several years, is the good idea of an instructor determining how well and effectively his methods are working for students to achieve the course goals. Unlike many other courses, this course's goals and assessment of the goals are not that difficult to define and to measure.

Students are expected to learn:

- the components characterizing the major genres within Biblical and classical Greek literature;
- the historical and cultural milieu that have encouraged these literary types;
- why this literature is “great”; i.e., what does it tell us about the universal human condition;
- the importance of this body of literature and its legacy;
- improved skills in several aspects of writing (see p. 25 in the 2006-2007 *Catalog* under “English Writing Skills”).

Part of assessment, however, is the obligation on the instructor's part to change the method and materials of instruction if some component appears to be ineffective. The possibility of ineffective instruction can be measured by consistent student performance, student evaluations, comparisons, where they exist, with other courses and their students' performances, and discussion with faculty teaching other sections of this same course.

Attendance policy: Other than my warning above about the necessity of taking exams and handing in writing assignments at the scheduled times, there is no attendance policy. However, I will repeat—in different words—that chronic absenteeism makes failing grades highly probable in this type of course. If you skip classes, I will not repeat lectures privately. Please attend.

Important dates:

September 18, 4:30 pm: Last chance to drop this class on Cyberbear with a refund.

September 19-October 9, 4:30: This class may be dropped for \$10 with a drop-slip.

October 10-December 8, 4:30: This class may be dropped only through the petition process with the approval of the instructor and Associate Dean. Getting my approval does not guarantee that the Associate Dean will agree. Don't get stuck in a class that you are failing. Keep up, watch the drop deadlines, act timely.

The final exam is scheduled for 8:00-10:00 a.m., Tue, Dec 12, LA 338 (our classroom).

Contact and autobiographical information: I am James M. Scott, Professor of Greek and Latin. For the past eight years I have been the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences,

but I have now gone back full time to the classroom. I came to The University of Montana in 1984.

My PhD is from the University of Washington, Seattle, in Classical Studies (meaning ancient Greek and Latin). My dissertation was on Seneca the philosopher, that is, Emperor Nero's tutor in the AD 50s-60s. My current research and publication are in two areas: 1) the allegorical use of Vergil, the greatest Roman poet, by Renaissance Churchmen; and 2) translating the Latin Jesuit records of early Indian missions in western Montana.

Campus Office: 206 Rankin Hall [Please note well: My office on the second floor of Rankin Hall (48 steps from the sidewalk to my office door) is NOT handicap accessible. If you want to see me in my office and you require accessibility, please call or email me (or see me in class), and we can schedule a meeting in a convenient, accessible site.]

Office Hours: MWF: 11:10-12:00/ TR: 10:10-11:00

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Home: (406) 626-2429 (emergencies only, please)

Email: scottjm@mso.umt.edu

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, PAPERS, AND EXAMS

Week 1 (Aug 28): Introduction and *Genesis*
Week 2 (Sept 4; Monday is holiday): portions of *Exodus*, *Deuteronomy*, *Joshua*, *Judges*
Week 3 (Sept 11): portions of *Samuel* and *Kings*
Week 4 (Sept 18): some Psalms, Proverbs, and *Ecclesiastes*
Week 5 (Sept 25): Homer: *Odyssey*; first paper due
Week 6 (Oct 2): Homer: *Odyssey*
Week 7 (Oct 9): Greek Lyric: Sappho, Archilochus, Pindar, *et al.*
Week 8 (Oct 16): Greek Tragedy: Sophocles' *Oedipus the King (Rex)*; mid-term exam
Week 9 (Oct 23): Selections from Plato
Week 10 (Oct 30): Intro. to the New Testament: *The Gospel of Mark*
Week 11 (Nov 6; Tuesday, 7th, is a holiday): selections from *Matthew*, *Luke*, *John*
Week 12 (Nov 13): *Acts of the Apostles*; second paper due
Week 13 (Nov 20; 22nd, 23rd, 24th are holidays): Apostolic Fathers: Diognetus
Week 14 (Nov 27): St. Augustine
Week 15 (Dec 4): Vergil's *Fourth Eclogue*; Christian allegory
Week "16" (Dec 11): The final exam is scheduled for 8:00-10:00 a.m., Tue, Dec 12, LA 338 (our classroom).
